



2008 GUIDE TO CULTURAL ETIQUETTE SCENARIOS

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAMS

Japan

Follow your leaders' instructions for the cultural etiquette scenarios. Americans and the United States are featured as examples, but the messages apply to all delegates.

1. You are meeting your Japanese hosts for the first time and want to greet them politely.
The correct greeting is a bow with arms straight at sides.
2. You are entering a Japanese home. You see shoes set up at the entrance, but you don't want to get your socks dirty.
Shoes must be removed upon entering the home.
3. You've been served a fish dish. You don't like fish at all.
Students should try at least a small amount of everything they are served and respond positively, regardless of whether they like it or not.
4. After a long day of travel, your delegation is waiting in a hotel lobby to get room assignments. You are exhausted but don't see a chair to sit on. You notice other students are starting to sit on the floor.
Students should never sit on the floor in public places.

In Addition

Use the following guidelines for proper etiquette in Japan:

- Avoid speaking loudly, as it is considered impolite. In fact, because the Japanese value serenity and silence, there might be times when good manners require not speaking at all. Instead of interpreting these as "awkward silences," learn to appreciate these times of quiet.
- Dress conservatively. Japan is a modest society. Even though you'll see Japanese youth dressed in styles you might deem outlandish, you and your delegates will be expected to dress with decorum. This is especially important when visiting a temple. Always wear long skirts or pants into a temple—never shorts. And keep the shoulders covered.
- Follow proper etiquette for using chopsticks. It's considered bad manners to play with chopsticks. Chopsticks should not be left in food, especially in the rice bowl, as this is also considered rude. Use the serving utensils to move food from the serving dishes to your plate or ask the server for a clean pair of chopsticks with which to serve the food.
- Avoid pointing your toes at others under the table when eating. This is very offensive in Japan.
- Don't be surprised if you notice Japanese people slurping their noodles. While we consider this poor table manners, in Japan, it's considered a sign of enjoyment.
- Avoid blowing your nose in public as it's considered impolite.
- When visiting schools or with government officials, delegates or leaders should not chew gum or wear hats.